

In re Application of: Erickson et al.
Application No.: 10/702,420

Remarks

In the application, claims 1 through 20 are pending. No claims currently stand allowed.

The Office Action dated March 3, 2005, has been carefully considered. The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 7, 9 through 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,394,135 ("Erickson"). The Office Action further objects to claims 3 through 6, 8, and 19 as depending upon rejected base claims, but indicates that these claims are otherwise allowable.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 3 through 6, 8, and 19 would be allowable if promoted to independent status incorporating all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the §102(b) rejection, however. The Office Action points to Figures 5 and 9 of Erickson but provides no further description of how these Figures anticipate the currently pending claims. Upon inspection, Erickson's Figures do not in fact portray the following highlighted elements of the currently pending independent claims:

Claim 1: A balanced plug valve, comprising:
a valve body defining a flow passage between an inlet and an outlet thereof;
a valve seat;
a balanced plug linearly movable relative to the valve seat for regulating a flow of fluid through the flow passage, the balanced plug having a first end exposed to fluid pressure from the inlet *and a sealing end configured to expose a pressure balancing surface to the fluid pressure from the inlet when in sealing engagement with the valve seat.*

(Emphasis added.)

Claim 14: A balanced globe valve, comprising:
a valve body defining a flow passage between at least a first inlet and an outlet thereof;
at least one valve seat fixably positioned within the valve body;
a balanced plug linearly movable within the valve body relative to the at least one valve seat for regulating a flow of fluid between at least the first inlet and the outlet, the balanced plug having a generally cylindrical perimeter wall terminating in a first end and a second end, *each of the first*

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end and the second end configured to expose a surface thereof to fluid pressure from the same one of the at least one inlet and the outlet such that the fluid pressure on the perimeter wall in a direction tending to impede linear movement of the balanced plug is balanced by fluid pressure on the perimeter wall in a direction tending to aid linear movement of the balanced plug.

(Emphasis added.)

Claim 20: In a balanced globe valve having a valve body defining a flow passage between at least a first inlet and an outlet thereof and at least one valve seat fixably positioned within the valve body, a balanced plug linearly movable within the valve body relative to the at least one valve seat for regulating a flow of fluid between at least the first inlet and the outlet, comprising:

a generally cylindrical perimeter wall terminating in a first end and a second end, each of the first end and the second end configured to expose a pressure balancing surface thereof to fluid pressure from the same one of the at least one inlet and the outlet such that the fluid pressure on the perimeter wall in a direction tending to impede linear movement of the balanced plug is balanced by fluid pressure on the perimeter wall in a direction tending to aid linear movement of the balanced plug when one of the first end and the second end is in sealing engagement with the valve seat.

(Emphasis added.)

This system of balancing fluid pressure when the valve is closed is discussed in the specification at, e.g., paragraph [0049] and is depicted in Figures 13 and 14. Figure 14 shows the valve in its closed position with the fluid pressure P2 on surface 74 balancing the fluid pressure P2 on surface 80. Erickson's Figures 5 and 9, in contrast, show no such surface that balances the fluid pressure when the valve is in its closed position.

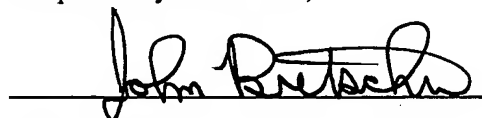
Thus, each of the currently pending independent claims contains an element that is not anticipated by, nor rendered obvious in light of, the cited art. These claims, and the remaining claims that depend from them, are therefore patentable over the cited art. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the §102(b) rejection and allow the pending claims.

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Conclusion

The application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Bretscher", is written over a horizontal line.

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